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Letter No. 2360

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SOVIET SPRING
SOWING

Spring sowing has begun in earnest in the USSR, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. On April 18 the Soviets issued the first weekly seeding progress report for the 1988 crop which showed that small grains and pulses were seeded on 9 million 900 thousand hectares. Last year, when spring was delayed, small grains and pulses were seeded on only 6 million 700 thousand hectares as of April 27.

NEED FOR
WORLD TRADE
REFORM

Acting Under Sec'y of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg called for the phasing out of trade-distorting government programs such as export subsidies. Speaking at the Texas Grain and Feed Association's Convention, Goldberg said that the latest data on European Community export subsidies showed that the EC paid 126 U.S. dollars per metric ton in subsidies to its wheat exporters. The subsidy for mixed feed was \$291; for semolina, \$286; for durum wheat, \$281; for barley malt, \$206.

NA
AGRICULTURE
USDA
BERRY
1988

CATTLE ON
FEED

Cattle and calves on feed on April 1, for slaughter in the 13 states reporting quarterly, totaled 9 million 370 thousand head, up 6 percent from April 1, 1987, and 5 percent above 1986, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The 13 states are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, S. Dakota, Texas and Washington.

NEW DROUGHT
TASK FORCE

A USDA Drought Task Force was established by Sec'y of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng, whose purpose is to establish intensive monitoring of the drought situation this spring in the Pacific Northwest and Western States. Chairing the group is Deputy Sec'y Peter C. Myers. Conditions likely to cause problems for agricultural producers prevail in parts of California, Nevada, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Utah and North Dakota.

SALES ACTIVITY
FOR INDIA &
CHINA

Private exporters recently reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture the sales of wheat to China and India. The sale to China amounted to 190,000 metric tons of which 140,000 was soft red winter and 50,000 tons of hard red winter. The sale to India was for 225,000 tons of wheat of which 150,000 was hard red winter wheat and 75,000 tons of white. Both sales were for delivery during the 1988-89 marketing year.

SOS TEST
FOR HOGS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has begun using a rapid, in-plant screening test, known as the Sulfa-On-Site--or SOS--test, in its intensified program for testing for sulfamethazine in hogs brought to slaughter plants. The SOS test is now being used in 23 swine slaughtering facilities. By May 27, the SOS test will be in use in approximately 100 plants, which account for 97 percent of all swine slaughtered nationwide.

SUMMER
HOTLINE

Sec'y of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng and Sec'y of Health and Human Services Otis R. Bowen, announced a pilot program for a Food Safety Hotline to serve American consumers in three states, Florida, Illinois and Massachusetts. Residents of these three states can call during June, July and August to ask professional home economists questions on any aspect of food safety. The results of the pilot program will determine whether the two departments set up a nationwide toll-free food safety hotline. The toll-free number to call in those states is: 1-800-426-3758.

DAIRY CATTLE
EXPORT
CHANGES

Since the Dairy termination Program has ended, the remaining dairy cattle initiatives under the Export Enhancement Program were withdrawn by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on April 29. The Commodity Credit Corporation accepted bonus bids for the export of 64,773 head of dairy cattle under the EEP. The EEP for dairy cattle was initiated to encourage exports of dairy cattle made available as a result of the Dairy Termination Program.

ADJUSTING
PRICE SUPPORT
LOANS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture made changes in procedures for adjusting price support loans to cover certain handling and transportation costs incurred by producers in moving grain to available approved storage locations to obtain price support loans. The amount of a producer's price support loan may be increased to reflect certain transportation and handling costs. Producers, when repaying their loans, repay these handling and transportation costs. For more details, contact your county ASCS office.

REOFFERED
TIMBER SALES

Under new rules adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, anyone may appeal Forest Service decisions to reoffer timber sales from returned or defaulted timber sale contracts on national forests. The final rule, published in the April 22 Federal Register, states that anyone, except the defaulting purchasers, may appeal future decisions to reoffer sales that were returned or defaulted. In addition, anyone wishing to appeal a reoffer decision made prior to January 28, may do so until May 23.

HIGH-VALUE
PRODUCTS TO
CANADA

Canada is the largest market for U.S. high-value product exports, accounting for almost 20 percent of total U.S. high-value product trade, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. High-value products include foods such as nuts, fresh fruits and vegetables, also dairy, livestock and poultry products. Although the outlook for trade appears good, labeling requirements continue to present possible constraints. For example, metric weights and measures must be stated on the labels of all prepackaged products. Bilingual labeling is required for almost all consumer food products.

CRP TALLY

Under the federal Conservation Reserve Program, landowners agree to place eligible land in trees, grasses, or other approved vegetative covers, for at least 10 years. In return, they receive annual rental payments, plus cost-sharing assistance in establishing the cover vegetation. The goal is 40-45 million acres in the CRP by 1990. In fiscal 1987, 13 million 800 thousand acres on 126,421 farms entered the CRP. Texas enrolled the most land, 1 million 820 thousand acres, followed by Iowa, 1 million 180 thousand acres. Nearly half the total acreage entering the reserve had an erosion rate of 20 or more tons per acre per year. A tenth of the acreage was losing an estimated 40 or more tons of soil per acre per year.

EXOTIC NEWCASTLE
FOR BIRDS ONLY --
SO FAR

Exotic Newcastle disease was confirmed in a couple of pet birds, one in Michigan and one in Nevada, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. No domestic poultry are involved in the outbreak. One originated in Mexico and was brought into the U.S. without the required 30-day quarantine. The other was purchased in Las Vegas from a man who bought it at a bird swap in San Diego. All the infected and exposed birds were destroyed to prevent the spread of the disease.

FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1613...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) On this edition of AGRICULTURE USA, Gary Crawford talks with Allan Stennett, a farm broadcaster and journalist from Great Britain. Stennett offers some surprising observations about U.S. agriculture and how it differs from agriculture in Great Britain and the European Community.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1601...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Price support loan update; USDA issues new horse protection rules; Ag. finances are improving; New market for sweet potatoes.

CONSUMER TIME #1093...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) A future heat wave; Choosing lean beef; Beef is a lot leaner these days; Year round clothes; Bargain time.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Tues, May 10, Weekly weather and crop outlook; U.S. crop production report; Soviet grain outlook; World supply and demand; Wed, May 11, World ag. supply and demand; World grain production, World oilseed outlook, World cotton outlook; Fri, May 13, Farm labor report. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

TELEVISION SERVICE programs, A BETTER WAY, DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and SATELLITE NEWS are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8 as follows:

Thursdays....AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET.....Transponder 12D

Saturdays....A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET.....Transponder 9X
ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET....Transponder 9X
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET.....Transponder 9X

Mondays.....A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET.....Transponder 12D
REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET....Transponder 12D
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET.....Transponder 12D

A BETTER WAY is also available on The Learning Channel SATCOM 3R, Transponder 2, Audio 6.8 each Thursday at 10:30 a.m. ET.

OFF MIKE

Jim Mills, Sales/Marketing Director for the NAFB for the past 8 years, is retiring May 1. NAFB's Sales/Marketing activity will be consolidated at one office in Racine, WI, where Charlie Might continues as Executive Sales/Marketing Director. Jim Mills is also busy turning Nelson Robinson, a confirmed, ordained and vested hunter and fisherman, into a golfer, since his retirement from USDA's ASCS...Kathleen Lonergan, Assoc. Farm Ed., KMA, Shenandoah, IA, in Wash. to cover Nat'l 4-H Conf., dropped in to do some USDA interviews. She reported that Rich Hull, Gen. Mgr, KMA, and Mike LePorte, Farm Dir., KMA, have returned from their fact finding trade mission to the Far East...Jack Towers, ex-USDA, made the Wash. Post story on the Smithsonian's acquisition of Duke Ellington's papers, music, records, tapes, etc. Jack's contribution is recognized

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in his reconstruction of Ellington's old RCA Victor tracks, radio transcripts, etc. that are "all the cleaner and crisper thanks to engineer Jack Towers."...Norm Hyde, Va. Farm Bureau Fed., writes he's convinced the Virginia News Network to offer an agricultural weather forecast as a new feature for its affiliates. Twenty-one of the network's 56 affiliates said they'll carry the program. This includes WSVB, Harrisonburg.

Margaret T. Desatnik

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